Approaching Ideologies of Things Made of Language:
A Case Study of a Finno-Karelian Incantation Technology

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This article introduces an approach to ideologies of texts and of categories of text type for approaching the emic conceptions of things made of language or other kinds of signs. Finno-Karelian incantations of the ritual specialist known as a *tietäjä* provide a case study, considered in the broader context of cultures in the Circum-Baltic region. Text ideology is salient in this tradition owing to a conception that a performer will lose an incantation's power when it is communicated as a whole to someone else, but not if verses are omitted. Discussion is organized in four parts, providing different types of contextualization before discussing emic conceptions of incantations proper. It begins with a theoretical introduction to text ideologies and genre ideologies in relation to language ideologies. This section includes positioning the approach from the perspective of (Finnish) folklore studies for better multidisciplinary accessibility. The second section contextualizes the *tietäjä* as a social institution, the corpora and approach. The third section introduces the ritual technology of the *tietäjä*, the physics of the world in which these operate and what these are conceived as 'doing' in ritual performance. The fourth section turns to the understanding of incantations as a type of text object in relation to the technology and their variation in practice.

Keywords: text ideology, genre ideology, language ideology, incantation, *tietäjä*, ritual technology, ontology

0. Introduction

Incantation is a term used in both scholarship and popular discussion to refer to orally delivered texts made of language, the performance (or sometimes any verbalization) of which is understood to cause changes in the empirically perceived world. The concern of the current paper is theo-

retical, although it is built on an empirical study, for which the tradition is extensively elaborated in order to make it accessible to an unfamiliar readership, and also to situate ideologies associated with its texts within broader networks of understandings about how the world works. The central focus is an exploration of the ideology of texts implicit in beliefs that a performer will lose the power of an incantation when it is transmitted to someone else. Finno-Karelian traditions associated with the ritual specialist called a *tietäjä* are here treated as a case study. This contextualization of the tradition also makes it possible to consider emic conceptions and interpretations underlying the loss of power when incantations are communicated. Although such interpretive frameworks can be assumed to vary by tradition, the case study offers a perspective on the phenomenon and how it might be considered in other cultures.

The conception that a person loses the power of an incantation when communicating the text to another individual is found in several cultures in the Circum-Baltic area, such as in Swedish (af Klintberg 1965: 28) and Lithuanian (Vaitkevičienė: 2008: 91) charm traditions. The theory argued here is that incantations were conceived as a special type of text-object that was simultaneously conceived as a knowledge-object, which people could possess and exchange. Conceptions of language's ability to affect the world have a long history of discussion, and have been broadly theorized from a wide range of perspectives (e.g. Cassirer 1925; Malinowski 1948; Tambiah 1968; see also Hautala 1960). The present discussion outlines emic[1] ideas about how Finno-Karelian incantations were thought to 'work' without pursuing general theories of connections between language and reality *per se*. This leads to perspectives on the linkage between text and knowledge in the tradition and how these operate and vary in use. Conceiving an incantation as a type of object made of language is also widely encountered in different forms, as is the concept that the force of an incantation can be transferred to material objects, through which it can then be further manipulated. In Russian traditions, for example, a spoken prayer could be carried and delivered in one's hat (Baiburin 2003: 167), or incantations spoken 'onto' a liquid or object that is then ingested as a vehicle for their power to affect a patient (Baiburin 2003: 165–168). The concept of a reusable text having a specific identity and the associated concept of such a text as being empowered to affect the world form stepping stones to reach the question

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[1] The terms *emic* and *etic* were coined by Kenneth L. Pike (1954), using 'emic' to refer to what are here addressed as 'vernacular' perspectives, categories and understandings, i.e. that come from within a culture, as opposed to those that are 'etic', i.e. that come from outside of the cultural framework to which they are applied (see also Dundes 1962; Harris 2001 [1968]; Headland et al. 1990).

of what happens to the power and the text object when it is communicated to someone else.

The case of the *tietäjä*'s incantations is particularly interesting in this regard because:

- *a*) A strategy for avoiding the loss of power was to withhold verses. This indicates the power was linked to a concept of the text as a 'whole'.
- *b*) Rather than a memorized and invariable series of words with mechanical effect, these incantations could be long and complex, sometimes hundreds of verses, and they might vary considerably between performances. This raises questions about the emic concepts of 'text' and 'whole' connected with them.
- *c*) From the texts and their variation, these incantations appear to operate at the level of constituent elements, which might be described as 'moves' of the specialist in real-time engagements with unseen agents and forces. There seems to be a tension between identification of power and efficacy of an incantation as a 'whole' and these constituent units of engagement, which seem to be the level at which efficacy in performance occurs.
- *d*) Finns and Karelians also had other forms of text-based mythic knowledge that seem to be transferred without the threat of loss of power.

The question targeted here particularly concerns loss of power *as an outcome of transmitting a particular type of unit of tradition to someone else who acquires that power*. This process is considered distinct from loss of power due to some type of violation without that power passing to someone else, which may be as simple as failing to keep it secret (e.g. Parsons 1996 [1939]: 433–435). It is also considered distinct from traditions in which an incantation's power is lost from the text after use and can thus be re-performed without effect (Bauman 1992; 2004: ch. 2). The idea of knowledge or oral text as a type of property – i.e. something 'owned' by a performer – is a much broader phenomenon, found even for completely secular folktales (e.g. Dégh 1969: 87–90; 1995: 201), but this moves into the conventions and social negotiation of authorized use, which does not necessarily exclude knowledge of others. Constraints on the transmission of knowledge invite interpretation through the lens of secrecy and the operation of secrecy in society (e.g. Stark 2006: ch. 6; cf. Jones 2014). Keeping knowledge or tradition as secret may also have numerous motivations, ranging from the broad maintenance of structures and power relations in society (e.g. Murphy 1980) to personal economic interest because the ability to perform an incantation or ritual is used for profit (e.g. Foley 1995: 129). However, it

is important to distinguish between the politics of exclusion structured by societies or groups who control access to shared knowledge (see Johnson 2006), which might indeed be unofficially known by, or familiar to, excluded groups (e.g. Lintrop 2012: 405), and constraints on the communication of objectified units of knowledge as instruments or tools. Value is conferred on these instruments of power or utility as things that one person possesses while others do not. When those instruments are made of knowledge or language, researchers view them through the etic category of 'secret', a category for knowledge-of but from which objects are excluded. It has been common in research to discussed the *tietäjä*'s incantations in terms of 'secret' knowledge (e.g. Siikala 2002a: 76, 84, 86, 93, etc.; Stark 2002a: 33, 84; Tarkka 2013: ch. 10; Frog 2017b: 607), and yet, if texts and knowledge are being conceived as objects, it becomes necessary to critically assess how accurate it is to discuss such objects as 'secret', which might be analogous to saying a knife is 'secret' because no one is allowed to touch it although it is publicly recognized as hanging on someone's belt (cf. Stark 2002a: 25). Amid this array of interconnecting topics, the focus here is on a quite specific, if widely encountered phenomenon.

This case study brings into focus what are here introduced as text ideologies and genre ideologies, theorized on the platform of work on language ideologies. Whereas research on language ideologies have been centrally developed in linguistic anthropology research, the current study is undertaken from the perspective of folklore studies. Folklore is defined in this context as *socially mediated and negotiated knowledge or competence in sign-based codes of expression, behaviour and understanding that are linked to imagination or aesthetics*. Many sign systems of folklore are not linguistic (e.g. mythology), although they may be mediated through language as in narration, while aesthetically marked forms of verbal art are commonly organized into recognizable complex and coherent wholes demarcated from preceding and following discourse. With folklore, texts as socially recognizable entities come into focus along with categories of text types and their potentially complex typologies. The approach developed here complements current perspectives on language ideologies by distinguishing and exploring ideologies of texts and of genres as perceivable categories of text type, stressing that these concepts are not restricted to texts made of language. Here, the knowledge, codes of expression and textual entities in circulation are in focus with concern for emic ideologies associated with them, rather than, for example, what these do in society, how they relate to social organization or their position in the dynamics of role relations in communities. Text ideology and genre ideology become particularly salient through the case study, where linguistic texts of a categorical type are treated as super-

naturally empowered objects, and each such text is considered a discreet and unique power-bearing entity.

The article is organized in four parts. In part one, the approach to text ideology is introduced as an extension of discussions of language ideology, to which it advances through genre ideology. Many readers will be centrally interested in the concept of text ideology and its potential relevance to their own research, and this section can be read without continuing through the case study, whereas readers primarily interested in the empirical study may prefer to skip section one. The idea that incantation texts can circulate as 'things' from which the power is lost when communicated has been widely commented on (e.g. Klintberg 1965: 28; Siikala 2002a: 264–265; Piela 2005: 24–25; Vaitkevičienė: 2008: 91), but is has not, to my knowledge, been previously explored and explicated as an ideology. The theoretical emphasis of discussion makes what would otherwise be a quite culture-specific case study relevant to a variety of closely related fields. The presentation of Finno-Karelian traditions and discussions have been developed to accommodate readers' diverse interests and backgrounds. Section two outlines, in broad strokes, the ritual specialist tradition and archival corpora of the study. Section three begins advancing into the case study, presenting concepts for approaching the tradition in relation to understandings of forces' operation in the world. Section four turns to the formal side of incantations from an etic perspective in order to explore relations between text and knowledge and understandings of incantations as objects that exist independent of individual performers.

1. From Language Ideologies to Ideologies of Genre and Text

1.1. Language Ideologies

Language ideology has been described in a number of ways, such as "the cultural (or subcultural) system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interest" (Irvine 1989: 255), "a mediating link between social structures and forms of talk" (Woolard 1992: 235), "culturally specific assumptions about the relations between language form and function" (Keane 1997: 57), or "beliefs, or feelings, about languages as used in their social worlds" (Kroskrity 2001: 498). The concept is commonly traced to Michael Silverstein's (1979) argument that how people talk about and evaluate language affects how language structure evolves, and the discussion surrounding it has developed rapidly since that time. The linkage of language varieties to social

identities was elegantly theorized by Judith T. Irvine and Susan Gal (2000) as *iconization*, where they also highlighted the phenomenon of selectivity in features brought into focus when distinguishing language varieties, while other features are rendered invisible or subject to *erasure* (cf. Lotman 1990: 58), a phenomenon that they stress also occurs among researchers. Rather than conceiving language ideologies as uniform and hegemonic, they are conceived as multiple, connected to different positions in systems of social relations and the construction and construal of identities (Irvine & Gal 2000: 35). Paul V. Kroskrity (2001: 203) usefully sets this multiplicity in relation to "'dominant' ideologies or those that have become successfully 'naturalized' by the majority of the group" (see also Kroskrity 1998). To make a sweeping generalization, discussion of language ideologies seems to be dominated by language varieties becoming iconic of social identities and what happens to their relative valorizations in discourse in processes of language standardization, in exchange economies, and so forth, as well as consequences of such iconization for both languages and groups in society (Krotskrity 2001 and works there cited). Attention tends to be on formal aspects of language on the one hand and aspects of ideology that connect with social relations along with their impacts on language or society on the other, not surprisingly reflecting interests in linguistic anthropology.

The concept of language ideology has been developed beyond consideration of language *per se*. An organic extension of the concept has been into semiotic ideologies, described by Webb Keane as:

> basic assumptions about what signs are and how they function in the world [which] determines, for instance, what people will consider the role that intentions play in signification to be, what kinds of possible agent (humans only? Animals? Spirits?) exist to which acts of signification might be imputed, whether signs are arbitrary or necessarily linked to their objects, and so forth. (Keane 2003: 419.)

From semiotic ideologies, it is quite natural to consider register ideologies (see e.g. Agha 2007). 'Register' emerged as a term to describe varieties of language linked to recurrent situations or practices (e.g. Halliday 1978), but the concept has gradually extended beyond language to multimodal expression and sign behaviour more generally (Agha 2001; 2007). Coming from the perspective of media studies, Ilana Gershon (2010a; 2010b) has carried these discussions from signs to media ideology, or ideologies with their relative valorizations of different media of interaction, such as contacting someone via email versus calling or making a personal visit.[2] The

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[2] I am thankful to Andrew Graan for pointing out this development to me and linking it to the concept of genre ideology.

approach to genre and text ideologies developed here is driven by a corresponding difference in emphasis that affects the phenomena that come into focus.

1.2. Folklore Research

Rooted in philology, folklore research emerged across the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with a text-centered focus; it was concerned with songs and stories, jokes and proverbs, as well as 'beliefs' (documented and discussed through verbal texts). In the performance-oriented turn during the second half of the twentieth century, however, attention shifted away from texts as 'things' that were inter-generationally transmitted. Oversimplifying things, discussions of language ideologies and registers in linguistic anthropology are inclined to attend to different ways of communicating and how ways of communicating relate to society. Thus, Michael Silverstein (2003: 212) describes registers as "alternate ways of 'saying "the same" thing' considered 'appropriate to' particular contexts of usage." Attention is on the medium as one among alternatives, and social and situational factors receive central consideration while what is communicated is secondary if not arbitrary. This is not surprising when discussion centers around relationships between language and social relations, but the possibility that the 'thing' or 'type of thing' being communicated could supersede situational factors in determining the choice of medium remains unconsidered. In a sense, folklore research has had the opposite emphasis, concerned with genres and text-types. Contextualization in a cultural-historical environment and consideration of situation-specific factors are no less important, but researchers are inclined to attend to a particular type of verbal art and its range of conventional uses and social meanings (i.e. a single way of communicating without concern for alternatives), to 'the same thing' or 'same type of thing' communicated, or to some combination of these.

These differences affect the perceived utility of concepts that can move across disciplines. In folklore research, tools for talking about differences between alternative speech varieties may be conceptually interesting, but there is not much to do with them when the practice in focus is characterized by a single type of speech. Tools developed for linguistic anthropology also tend not to be equipped to distinguish language from linguistically mediated signs, such as images, motifs or plots that may also be communicated through, for example, iconography or enactment independent of linguistic signs. The tools in a field evolve in relation to the uses to which they are

put, suiting them to the types of materials or phenomena addressed and the questions they are used to answer.

Lifted from the disciplinary emphases of linguistic anthropology, language ideology has potential to bring something new to the table for folklorists as a tool for discussing "basic assumptions about what signs are and how they function in the world" (Keane 2003: 419). By shifting attention from social identities and relations, it could fill a generally unnoticed gap in terminology for addressing conceptions of language and language varieties connected with the supernatural. 'Ideology' avoids the word 'belief's connotations, carried by associations with Christianity, of objective subscription of faith. It equally avoids connotations of inconsistency with (the researcher's) 'true knowledge' that is encoded in words like 'magic' or 'superstition'. Karelians, for example, had a concept of being *sanan alla* ['under the word'], conceived as a state of (in etic terms: supernatural) affliction caused by other people's speech (Tarkka 2013: 120–125). Nenets distinguish a type of harmful speech called *vyvku vada*, which becomes a 'thing', with objective existence, that can be manipulated and redirected by others (Vallikivi 2015). Language ideology offers a way of talking about these types of phenomena irrespective of whether the social dynamics surrounding them are brought into focus.

When approaching folklore, it has become common to distinguish broader collective traditions from their dialects and idiolectal (i.e. of a single person) forms, placing what is individual in relation to social tradition.[3] For ideologies, this means abstracting generalized social frames of reference for what a tradition 'is', 'does' and 'how it works', which, at least initially, can be distinguished from evaluative stance-taking toward the tradition and its emblematic users (if there are such). The broader a frame of reference's geographic, historical and cultural scope, the more abstract the generalization, leaving areas of greater variation open and potentially foregrounding inherited norms. The narrower the frame, for example to a single small community, the closer it may be possible to come (at least in theory) to intersubjective understandings engaged in that environment. The abstracted frame of reference then provides a context for exploring variation by region, group or individual.[4] This is a pragmatic approach that allows features of social consensus to be distinguished from those that vary on an areal, social or individual basis, and for variations to be correlated. The

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[3] The performance-oriented turn produced a trend of focusing on the microcosm of the performance event, which could result in losing sight of collective tradition as a frame of reference (see also Bronner 2016: 10).

[4] This makes abstraction more of a research tool than what Kroskrity (2001: 203) describes as 'dominant' ideologies.

ability to correlate variations can also makes hierarchies of dependency salient, which may be significant in analysis.[5]

1.3. Register and Genre Ideologies

From the perspective advanced here, register ideology and genre ideology can be fruitfully distinguished. The distinction between genre and the much more recent concept of register often blur and may even converge, especially when genre is treated in terms of broad categories of discourse or utterance (for discussion, see Frog 2015b; 2016b). The principle difference is that register refers primarily to a variety of semiotic resources for expression whereas genre refers primarily to a category of texts as products (Koski 2011: 322–324: Frog 2015b: 78–82, 89–91; 2016b: 60–61). The Karelian lament register was conceived as the only language that the dead could understand (Stepanova 2014; 2015). This conception can be viewed in terms of an ideology of the register, which might be considered in relation to the social authority and identity of lamenters (Stepanova 2015) as well as in its social function as the primary medium for interaction with kin in the cemetery, conceived as a neighbouring village (Stepanova & Frog 2015; see also Tarkka 2013: ch. 31; Frog 2019a: §5.4). Whereas register ideology concerns the sign system of expression, genre ideology concerns expressions identified with a particular genre or sub-genre text-type category.[6] Karelian laments were performed ritually at funerals, commemoration ceremonies for the dead, weddings and ceremonies for men conscripted into military service, as well as being performed on non-ritual occasions. Funeral laments were performed to actualize (and thus also ensure) the successful journey of the deceased from the living community to the otherworld and successful integration into the community of ancestors. Particular text-types were required at the different phases of the ritual, and although

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[5] Hypothetically, for example, there may be consensus on the efficacy of incantations, but variation in the interpretation of that efficacy's source of power as from the specialist, God, the Devil or something else. Interpretation of the Devil as the source of power might then be found to co-vary with an evaluative stance to incantations and assumptions about the identities of performers, a pattern that could be dominant in some regions while remaining contested or even generally rejected in others. Such competing ideologies are hierarchically dependent on the central conception of incantations' efficacy, which may be displaced in the process of modernization. As a result, the whole discourse of interpreting that efficacy might be resituated in competition with ideologies that reject it.

[6] I take a semiotic approach to genre whereby generic products operate with a signifier + signified relation linking formal conventions with conventions of what is expressed, viewed within a broader four-aspect system that relates genres to social practices and situates them in relation to one another (Frog 2016b).

the verbal text of this improvised poetry would vary considerably between performances, ideologies were attached to particular text-types concerning both their effect on the unseen world and their crucial significance for deceased members of the community. Some approaches to register incline toward a convergence with genre (e.g. Agha 2007). However, such approaches focus on categories of expressive behaviour without bringing into focus the potential for sign behaviour's products to be conceived as bounded entities understood and distinguished categorically within potentially complex typologies. Lamenters' metadiscourse, for instance, treats laments as 'things' – coherent, complex and bounded entities made of language that are conceived as wholes and may also be iconic of associated non-linguistic semiotic behaviour (Stepanova, p.c. and see Stepanova 2014). They distinguish not only the type of ritual but also different laments within a ritual according to categorical identities, among which some are essential for the success of a ritual while others might be omitted (Stepanova 2014). The understanding of Karelian laments and what they do in the world cannot be reduced to register ideology because it is necessary to account for ideologies linked to particular lament text-types as opposed to others and also to account for individual laments discussed as 'things' made of language that may be iconic of the respective ritual practices of which they are emblematic. At the same time, Karelian lament's genre and register ideologies are not independent; they can instead be seen as connected, with genre ideologies participating in the broader register ideology.

The idea that performance manifests what is performed with objective existence is found widely and in a variety of forms. In some epic traditions of Northern Eurasia, people conceive performance as actualizing the mythic events they narrate, giving historical events objective reality in the present; in some of these, mistakes in performance or failure to properly conclude an epic were conceived as having real-world consequences through punishment by the heroes, who might even killed the singer (Функ 2005: 344–352). Again, this is not simply an ideology of the register, which might be conceived as one of several ways to 'say the same thing'. It is an ideology of the genre, which combines the register as a semiotic medium with mythic plots that it is used to express, producing an epic, and it is the performance of 'an epic' that is conceived as giving objective reality in the present to events that transpired in the past. Before zooming in on particular epics, it is important to recognize that they share a categorical identity bound up with an ideology that operates across individual epics.

Of course, genre ideologies are not limited to mythic quality. Finno-Karelian kalevalaic epic, for instance, was connected with ideals of non-variation in reproduction distinguishable from those of other genres in the same poetic form (e.g. Timonen 2000: 653), reflecting a difference in ideol-

ogy connected to particular text-type categories. Similarly, in medieval Iceland, genres of traditional poetry like the short epic 'eddic' poems, riddles, aphorisms and so forth circulated without connection to particular poets, whereas genres of so-called 'skaldic' or 'court' poetry were characterized by linking 'texts' to particular poets and historical events or situations of composition and initial performance (Clunies Ross 2005). In this tradition, genre ideologies exhibit marked variation in whether texts as things are linked to the identities of particular people. Poems of this type thus became objects in exchange economies (cf. Irvine 1989) that reciprocally made competence in the (challenging) poetic register a form of cultural capital (Wanner 2008). Of course, a register ideology and its emblematic genres are intimately linked, but it remains potentially valuable to distinguish between the ideology of a particular type of texts as products and that of the resources for producing them.

1.4. Genre and Text Ideology

Text ideology narrows consideration still further to the emic understandings of a text as a particular text as opposed to something else. Text may be broadly conceived as "any coherent complex of signs" (Bakhtin 1986: 103) and *a* text as a coherent complex of signs that forms a bounded entity conceived as a whole, whether it is embedded within a broader continuous stretch of discourse or is a fragment that has become separated from surrounding discourse (e.g. as a video clip or manuscript fragment). Scholars have long wrestled with conceptions of 'word-for-word' reproduction that may be claimed, for example, among performers of oral epic (see Foley 2002: 11–18; cf. Lord 1960); scholars have even sought to theorize it as a fundamental difference between oral and written cultures (Ong 2002 [1982]). Karelian lamenters, for example, seem not to have generally conceived laments as texts that would have an enduring existence beyond the particular performance (cf. Stepanova 2014). Icelandic skaldic poetry, on the other hand, was composed to be reperformed. The compositions were referred to with titles or their opening verses (Quinn 1997) and they were 'by' particular poets 'about' things and could be 'given' to others (see e.g. Turville-Petre 1976). This did not create 'ownership' in a sense of exclusivity in rights of reproduction but rather situated poems as things made of language in a set of social and historical relations (which, among other things, made such poems stable nexuses in the oral transmission of historical knowledge). Such poems have often been treated as simply 'memorized' and conceived through researchers' own understanding of written texts,

but they operated in distinct ways in the culture, both socially and in oral variation.

Similarly, kalevalaic epics were a short epic form that was reproduced with ideals of non-variation, so a hundred-line epic's local form may exhibit remarkably little variation even across generations of singers (Frog 2016a). Singers could comment on ways that others would perform the same epic or even perform the respective stretches of verses (e.g. *SKVR* I₁ #100.130 –145). On the other hand, long epics mentioned above seem to have been conceived, not in terms of text made of language, but as events with historical or mythic reality. In this case, the 'coherent complex of signs' forming a text identity appears to be constituted of elements of narration imagined as iconic and actualizing what they describe(an ideology of the text that will be considered in relation to kalevalaic epic below), while the oral-poetic register is a medium of the text.[7] In Nenets tradition, an epic song was conceived not simply as events constituting the narrative but also as an active and independent being that could move around and do things, as well as be present as an agent within the narrative itself (Lukin 2016). Text ideology is intimately linked to genre ideology – i.e. the ideology of the text-type to which a text belongs – but it is potentially crucial to also distinguish the ideology of a text as a thing as well. This sketch of text and genre ideologies is oriented to the discussion of incantations below, but it suggests the much broader applicability of the concepts.

2. Situating the *tietäjä* Tradition and Its Documentation

2.1. Historical Contexts

Finland and Karelia were annexed into the Middle Ages when the territories were divided up between the kingdom of the Svear, which would become Sweden, and Novgorod, which would become part of Russia. The borders were formed without regard for the people who lived there. This political and economic division aligned with a division between the western and eastern Churches, respectively (e.g. Ahola & Frog 2014: 43). What would become Finland was part of Sweden until Sweden lost it to Russia in 1809, at which time Finland became a Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire. This change occurred in the era of National Romanticism, bringing 'Finland' into focus and creating questions of national identity for the Grand

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[7] Viewed in this light, the lack of an enduring text identity of a funeral lament is unsurprizing: the performance actualizes, for example, the particular deceased person's journey to the otherworld only once.

Duchy's predominantly Swedish-speaking elite (Hautala 1954; 1969). The ideology of 'one nation, one language, one culture' brought attention to 'Finnish' language, and, with it, 'Finnish' culture, as these were imagined at that time, stimulating the documentation of vernacular traditions (see also Wilson 1976). 'Finnish' was initially conceived as the language of 'Finland' in contrast to languages of Sweden and Russia. The construction of linguistic identity in connection with national identity inclined people to treat linguistic difference in terms of dialect rather than language, a difference that was particularly blurred in the case of Karelian, which is today recognized as a distinct language (Haapoja-Mäkelä et al. 2018). Karelian is closely related to Finnish and, historically, the Russian–Swedish border had cut through Karelia, the Karelian linguistic and cultural area. From today's perspective, what was happening in the nineteenth-century can be described as a national heritage construction project. This project gained considerable momentum in response to the publication of Elias Lönnrot's literary epic *Kalevala* (1835, considerably revised and expanded in 1849), developed on the basis of collected oral poetry. Publication of Lönnrot's epic particularly stimulated the documentation of poetry in local forms of the common Finnic tetrameter, which became anachronistically dubbed 'Kalevala-meter' or 'kalevalaic poetry'. This movement resulted in massive archival collections developing across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. (In English, see further e.g. Hautala 1969; Wilson 1976; Anttonen 2005; Harvilahti 2012; Haapoja-Mäkelä et al. 2018).

The political division between Sweden and Russia affected the evolution of traditions on either side of the border. The Western Church and Reformation had significant impacts on kalevalaic poetry and associated practices in Finland, breaking it down considerably: poetry handling non-Christian mythological subjects had largely disappeared by the nineteenth century. Immigration and cultural influence from Sweden to western parts of Finland extended to incantations and associated ritual practices, affecting the tradition as a whole. This process is connected to the assimilation of medieval Christian and later Scandinavian incantations along with a more general shift to shorter, textually regular, 'memorized' verbal charms that could be conceived as affecting the world in a more or less 'mechanical' fashion (Hästesko 1918: 28; cf. Siikala 2002b: 73). Variation by region was significant (Siikala 2012). To the east, incantations are longer, more variable and heavily stratified by images and motifs with pedigrees from different eras. The connection of the efficacy of performance to the power of the specialist is a prominent feature of the tradition. This conception is especially discussed for its eastern forms (see further Siikala 2002a), but is still found during the twentieth century in Southwest Finland (e.g. Kopponen 1973: 79; SKS KRA Hugo Hörtsänä 383. 1953. Orivesi (b)). Although

the mythological epic tradition had largely disappeared from Finland by the beginning of the nineteenth century, the institution of the *tietäjä* remained vital as a socially significant role, in large part because alternatives like modern medical doctors were not commonly available in most of the country (Piela 2006: 293). Traditions related to non-Christian vernacular religion fared better in the Orthodox environment of Russian Karelia. Although St. Petersburg was founded on the Karelian Isthmus, the territories to the north were, from the perspective of the Russian Empire, a wilderness comparable to Siberia, to which people would flee from religious and secular prosecution (Pentikäinen 1978: 100–101). Particularly in the northern regions, the few Church-authorized agents (often of questionable repute) had almost no presence in local village communities (Tarkka 2013: 38–39). In these areas, the *tietäjä* institution was in full swing at the beginning of the nineteenth century alongside non-Christian mythology, which not only made them key destinations for early folklore collectors, but the vast majority of mythological and ritual poetry that was compiled and recomposed by Elias Lönnrot into his *Kalevala* was collected there. Incantations might be only a relatively short series of verses, but many incantations were a hundred lines long or still longer.

2.2. The Corpora and Approach

The case study below is built on materials in the archive of the Finnish Literature Society, of which the greater part of the kalevalaic poetry collection is published, and the study also builds on the extensive earlier research on these materials (esp. Siikala 2002a; Stark 2006; Tarkka 2013). The Finnish Literature Society's archive houses more than four million items of folklore, mostly in the form of written texts, but also audio and video recordings, and it is probably the largest in the world. The corpus is extremely heterogeneous, which impacts on the questions it can or cannot answer. The approach here is through archival folklore research. The traditions rapidly disappeared in the wake of modernization: few *tietäjä*s remain today, which itself impacts on their incantation tradition that has disappeared with the institution, and are today accessed through the archive. The case study might get labelled 'archival ethnography' (a term with lovely alliteration), but it is focused on the folklore, which it situates in relation to society, users and uses, rather than focusing on society or culture more broadly and observing folklore within it. The difference might seem subtle, but emic text ideology has been a long-standing concern for folklore studies, which has equipped research for developing perspectives on dif-

ferent forms of variation, even if these may generally remain in the background of discussion.

The earliest documented incantations in Kalevala-meter date from the seventeenth century (*SKVR* XI #866, #1001, #1009). At roughly the same time, early documents associated with the Orthodox Church also refer to practices of the Karelian specialist (Korpela 2008: 48–50). However, examples of the incantation tradition remain quite slim until the nineteenth century. Nineteenth-century collection predominantly focused on traditions as 'text' within the ideologies of collectors. Collection operated in a broader framework of language ideology that made language iconic of culture and connected this with national identity (Haapoja-Mäkelä et al. 2018).[8] Traditions in languages other than the one in a collector's focus were rendered invisible (cf. Lotman 1990: 58) or, in Irvine and Gal's terminology (2000: 38–39), subject to 'erasure'.[9] Multilingualism is thus not generally observable in the corpus.[10] Although collectors' interests could vary, they normally worked within a dominant genre ideology that hierarchized the text-types relevant for documentation. Kalevalaic poetry was valorized over other forms of verbal art, such as lament poetry (cf. Stepanova 2014: 15–16), and genres linked to non-Christian mythology or religion were valorized among types of texts that were considered transmitted from the remote past while genres seen as Christian, foreign or simply as parts of contemporary discourse were largely ignored.[11]

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[8] The collection efforts that produced these massive archival collections up through World War II belong to nation-building projects (see also Anttonen 2004).

[9] Although Finland has two national languages, Finnish and Swedish, each language has its own 'literature society' with archives of folklore in the respective language. There is relatively little dialogue between them, even though the two institutions are located on opposite sides of the same block in Helsinki. To my knowledge, there has never been an attempt to determine whether materials from the same informants may be found in both societies' collections.

[10] There are examples of, among other things, one language being represented within a text documented in another, which might be as little as a Russian phrase as direct speech in narration (e.g. SKS KRA Pekka Pohjanvalo 226. 1936. Salmi, Mantsinsaari (i)) or a more integrated appearance of Sámi in a Finnish-language incantation (*SKVR* XII$_1$ #3520). What is absent is where performance might move between whole 'texts' in different languages used in combination, as when Karelian lamenters say prayers in Russian as part of their ritual performance (cf. Stepanova 2017). On multilingualism and charm traditions, see also Daiva Vaitkevičienė's (2008: 71–75) discussion of Lithuanian traditions.

[11] Some of these types of traditions began to receive attention toward the end of the nineteenth century. A. A. Borenius, for example, who was an extremely active collector in the 1870s and 1880s, "noted down any information he could find on the singers' families, enquired into the persons who had taught them and analysed the various modes of singing in the villages" (Siikala 2002b: 33). For discussions and analyses of many of these types of materials, see Tarkka 2013.

Generally speaking, nineteenth-century collectors' dominant text ideology rendered everything but informants' verse or narrative invisible. For the most part, they documented poems from as many different people as possible, but not multiple examples from the same person.[12] This reflects the conception of oral texts as ideal things made of language that people possessed and which they could give to collectors, or which collectors could otherwise get through barter. A few collectors were more sensitive, but, for the most part, variation from person to person, from village to village and from region to region were recognized (e.g. Krohn 1918 I: 38), but not variation in reproduction by single individuals. There seems not to have been a concern about whether a text was dictated or sung, how interruptive the process of documentation might become, nor apparently did collectors realize that performers might remember more or be more comfortable on a second encounter. Their text ideology conceived of the oral text as a thing acquired in one go.[13] This ideology is linked to the short epic form (normally about 75–300 lines, depending on the plot), which was particularly prized as a source for mythology: the phraseology of these epics was remarkably consistent across performances (on which, see Frog 2016a). The text ideology's objectification of poems also led collectors to evaluate informants according to the alignment of what they presented with collectors' ideals (cf. Harvilahti 1992b). Collectors were looking for texts that were long, well-organized and regular relative to social tradition. Consequently, the people who were said to be the best and most knowledgeable could prove disappointing, and some collectors were particularly sceptical of *tietäjä*s (Siikala 2002b: 32). Collector's text ideology had a consequence that incantations were simply collected from people who could offer 'texts', irrespective of whether they were specialists.

The central corpus for approaching the *tietäjä*'s own traditions is that of kalevalaic poetry. Of around 150.000 items of kalevalaic poetry in the Finnish Literature Society's archives, more than 87.000 are published in the collection *Suomen Kansan Vanhat Runot* (*SKVR*), now also digitized (https://skvr.fi/). Of these, currently 33.276 items are indexed as incantations under 1.251 types (runotyypit: 'loitsut'), all documented before 1940,

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[12] Scribbling down poems in shorthand with quill and ink, they were centrally concerned with documenting poems and versions of poems and individual verses that had not been previously recorded, and they might not write down a single verse if they thought something had been recorded previously.

[13] There were, of course, exceptions to this, such as Borenius, who would transcribe from both dictation and sung performance, and in a number of cases returned to people he had visited years earlier and actively documented second versions of the same poems he had recorded before – noting additions, omissions and other variations around the originally recorded text.

and roughly half before 1900. This includes all incantation types, not just those associated with the *tietäjä*, but it gives a glimpse of the size of the corpus. In addition, kalevalaic epic was intimately linked to incantations and reflects a mythology of the *tietäjä*, which was reciprocally significant in constructing the identity and authority of *tietäjä*s, both as individuals and as a social institution (Tarkka 2013; see also Siikala 2002a; Frog 2013). Mythological epic could be used as the beginning of an incantation or even as an incantation itself, perhaps with a shift in the course of narration or its conclusion. During much of the nineteenth century, collectors might only record the narrative portion of such incantations, leaving off the rest: collectors' ideologies evaluated texts in relation to aims of reconstructing text objects as heritage, and might only take the trouble of writing down what was relevant to that aim. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, collection practices changed, especially in connection with particular collectors (see Hautala 1954; 1969). The amount of information about performers and performance practices increases, along with the documentation of interpretations and broader belief traditions.

Emic text ideologies could also impact the collection of incantations, conceived as 'things' that possessed power, which might be lost in the exchange. As in other parts of the Baltic Sea region, people who knew incantations might flatly refuse to present them to collectors because of this type of ideology. In the Finno-Karelian tradition, however, the power could be retained by leaving off part of the text (which seems to have been the end) so that it was not given as whole. This practice occasionally receives comment (e.g. Borenius 1904: 478) but generally remains invisible in the corpus of recorded texts.[14] An unusual feature of the ideology in Finland and Karelia was that the question of loss of power was widely connected to a condition of age hierarchy: power would be lost if knowledge were given from a younger to an older person, but not if given from an older person to one younger.[15] A factor in why the corpus of incantations is so rich and exten-

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[14] E.g. Borenius comments on this practice by Kostja Huotarini (Niemi 1921: 1091; trans. in Siikala 2002a: 264–265), from whom he recorded four incantations (*SKVR* I$_4$ #323, #491, #913, #1133). No indication is provided with the incantations' texts of omitting verses owing to concern about the transfer of power, although one of them includes the singer's comment that he did not present the whole thing because, if recited correctly, his *luonto* would rise (*SKVR* I$_4$ #491, n.23).

[15] E.g. *Näitä taikoja pidettiin hyvin salassa, eikä niitä saanut kertoa itseään vanhemmalle henkilölle, sillä silloin taiat menettävät voimansa* (SKS KRA Porin tyttölyseo 2451. 1936. Pori (b). < Lydia Laine, b. 1903 in Noormarkku) ['These charms were kept very secret, and [you] couldn't tell them to a person older than yourself, since then the charms lose their power'].

sive is likely that many specialists did not see the power of their knowledge threatened by giving it to a younger collector.[16]

Especially in the twentieth century, collection takes new directions, extending into the documentation of discourse surrounding traditions. Collection became part of researcher training; calls for people to send information directly to archives were published in newspapers; schools had students collect folklore as part of the curriculum, and so forth. The quantity and diversity of material is huge, including simple answers to questionnaire-type questions, legends, personal experience narratives, sayings, long, complex written documents, and later audio and video interviews. The primary materials are organized by collector or, in some cases, by what might be described as a 'collecting instrument', such as a school or a published call to which responses were made. Indexing systems were developed to navigate this data, which is otherwise a bit like a library where the books are in alphabetical order. Indexing systems start from a broad category of folklore, like belief traditions; categories and subcategories were organized within these, like belief traditions' category D for things connected to *tietäjä*s and *noita*s (an old word for 'shaman' that came also to mean 'witch'; generally, a dangerous and potentially hostile ritual specialist who is 'other'[17]). Under these, usually numbered types are grouped, like, following the English translation of Marjatta Jauhiainen (1998: 134), "D1–200 Sorcerer's, witch's characteristics and tools of trade", with anywhere between two to a few hundred index cards under each numbered type. An individual type may be quite narrowly distinguished,[18] or an open category into which a variety of items are gathered.[19] The indexing is by no means exhaustive by type, but index cards in categories relevant here are for the most part typed transcriptions of the primary sources, that might

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[16] Cf. *"Taikaa ei saa kertoa itseään vanhemmalle, sillä silloin menettää taika voimansa. Sulle käy kyllä puhuminen, kun olet niin paljon nuorempi." Kertoi minulle.* (SKS KRA Oskari Nousiainen 163. 1912. Kangasniemi, Nousiala (f.).) ['"You can't tell a charm to someone older than yourself, whereby then the charm loses its power. To you, sure it's fine to speak, when you are so much younger." [He] told me.']

[17] In some regions, *noita* became conflated with *tietäjä* and other terms in popular discourse, and in some examples use of *noita* reflects the wording of a collector or questionnaire (e.g. SKS KRA H. Kuusi KRK 30:121. 1935. Suoniemi (b).)

[18] E.g. D79 labelled "By eating the flesh of a white snake, a person is able to understand the language of the birds, the animals – servant tastes snake soup before his master … hears and understands when a bird predicts the servant's own death – in his rage, the master kills the servant", 13 examples (Jauhiainen 1998: 137).

[19] E.g. D11 is a general category for becoming a *tietäjä* complementary to several related and more and less specific types, it includes items ranging from sayings and statements about being born with teeth as an indicator of a child's ability to fantastic legends describing tests or experiences of potential apprentices.

require several note cards or include information relevant to several types, with organized subtypes. Such indices are practical tools for topics with which they align, like many aspects of the *tietäjä* tradition, but questions about things that do not align with what is grouped in the system are much more challenging to investigate. All sorts of interesting things can be found by simply reading through manuscripts; the difficulty comes in contextualizing those things in relation to others to build a perspective on social traditions in such heterogenous corpora.

The corpora are suited to exploring social traditions in the dialectic between qualitative close reading of individual items and broad quantitative perspectives on the corpus and its variation. In broad strokes, there is normally so little contextual information that it is impossible to situate individual items socially or situationally. From the end of the nineteenth century, information began to be collected on informants, but this is often rather like census data – name, age, location and perhaps occupation – but not whether the person was particularly knowledgeable on a topic or just answering a direct question as best he or she could. Sometimes a manuscript behind the index card can contain a fuller record of an interview with more developed information on the informant, and there are informants and also individual *tietäjä*s surrounding which the data is relatively thick,[20] but this is the exception rather than a norm. In addition, individual specialists about whom thicker data is available do not necessarily correlate with being representative of social tradition.[21]

The archival corpora offer perspectives from numerous individuals distributed across a huge geographical area, spanning political, religious and linguistic borders, and this bigger data becomes a context in relation to which individual examples are assessed. For example, if there were only three or four statements about mythic knowledge being transmittable to one younger but not older than oneself, it might not even warrant a note. Finding about 80, on the other hand, both under type D11 and in an accumulating body of references elsewhere through the corpus, gives a more developed picture. This conception is found in all regions of Finland and Karelia except, so far, Finland Proper (i.e. the southwest tip of Finland), and is by far the most prominent motif linked to the communication of empow-

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[20] It would of course also be possible to pursue additional information on particular informants through other types of sources, such as local historical records, based on name, date and location, but this would create a considerable research project around each of hundreds of individual items reviewed.

[21] E.g. the *tietäjä* Heikki Hurstinen (1886–1972) of the Häme (Tavastia) region of Finland interpreted the body's innate force (*luonto*) through the modern concept of electricity (Kopponen 1973: 78–79).

ered knowledge between living people.[22] The constraint on teaching knowledge to someone older versus someone younger can also help illustrate how focus on the folklore affects what comes into the foreground for the study.

If people and society are the focal point of analysis, this constraint is easily generalized as a 'concept', 'belief' or 'ideology' and interpreted as projecting social authority on supernatural potential or as ensuring that the transmission of knowledge aligns with the progression of generations rather than contravening it. When this constraint comes into focus as folklore, it is treated a unit of tradition that is transmitted, varies and may be reinterpreted over time. Here, it is considered a theme or complex motif that may be narrated or experienced, an approach that provides a framework for considering its variations,[23] such as occasional inversions of the younger/older opposition so that teaching to one younger would cause the loss of power,[24] or in one example as referring to the ages of children relative to one another rather than to the teller.[25] Focus on the units of tradition draws attention to their variation and the potential for formal continuities to endure through stratified interpretations. This can be compared to the connection of *tietäjä*s' power to teeth, so that being born with teeth is an indicator of the innate power of a *tietäjä* (e.g. SKS KRA Porin tyttolyseo, Nelly

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[22] Mention of 'living people' excludes the acquisition of knowledge from supernatural agents or corpses, which were also part of belief traditions.

[23] The term motif has been quite flexibly used in folklore research for any constituent unit of tradition however simple or complex. I prefer to distinguish these by types in a structural hierarchy: I treat 'image' as a minimal unit that is static, corresponding to the grammatical category of a noun, 'motif' as a minimal dynamic unit, 'theme' as a more complex unit constituted of motifs forming a conventional unit of tradition, whether these simply cluster, are regularly ordered, or form a complex system, while 'narrative pattern' is at a still higher order of complexity and may be constituted of themes. The base of this motif may be described by the semantic equation A TEACHES B MAGIC, which is linked to a second motif A LOSES MAGIC'S POWER (also linked to other motifs). The loss of power from teaching an incantation or ritual could be described as A TEACHES B MAGIC > A LOSES MAGIC'S POWER. The condition of age hierarchy produces a complex equation: A TEACHES B MAGIC: *if* B IS OLDER THAN A > A LOSES MAGIC'S POWER; *if* B IS YOUNGER THAN A > A DOES NOT LOSE MAGIC'S POWER.

[24] E.g. SKR KRA A. V. Rantasalo 325. 1934. Salmi, Hyrsylä (i); SKS KRA Päiviö Alaranta 350. 1949. Kittilä (n). This can be abstracted as a complex equation, with the inverted conditions underlined: A TEACHES B MAGIC: IF B IS YOUNGER THAN A > A LOSES MAGIC'S POWER; IF B IS OLDER THAN A > A DOES NOT LOSE MAGIC'S POWER.

[25] E.g. *Kun taikasanansa puhui vanhemmalle lapsellees, niin taika menettää tehoos, mut nuoremmalle veljelle se oli kertonut minun isäni, ja se kertoi taas minulle* (Jouko Hautala 1952. 1945. Pyhäjärvi Ul. < K.S. Waltzer, 70 v.) ['When his magic words were spoken to his older child, well the magic lost its power, but my father had told it to my younger brother, and he told again to me']. This unique example can be abstracted to the equation: A TEACHES B MAGIC: *if* B IS OLDER THAN ALL SIBLINGS > MAGIC LOSES POWER; *if* B IS YOUNGER THAN A SIBLING > MAGIC DOES NOT LOSE POWER.

Myllyharju 1447. 1933. Lavia), while loss of teeth is correlated with a loss of the power for efficacy in performance.[26] Teeth thus get interpreted through conceiving the *tietäjä*'s power in terms of 'hardness' (Stark 2006: 306–314), but this is presumably a reinterpretation since the connection between teeth and power is found in several Uralic (also called Finno-Ugric) cultures (i.e. linguistically related to Finnish and Karelian) but not in other incantation-centered traditions in the Baltic Sea region, suggesting an independent background (see Frog 2017a: 60 and works there cited). With the age hierarchy, reinterpretation in relation to changes in society is no less likely, but its historical origins are opaque. A broader comparative investigation like this one focuses on overviews of formal features, structures and their associations observable in empirical data at the level of scope under consideration (e.g. local, regional, transregional), considering examples in relation to one another to build up perspectives that situate evidence in increasingly nuanced contexts. The concerns about variation that broke down aims of reconstruction and identifying origins of traditions in earlier folklore research also produced skepticism toward making generalizations about meanings and relationships to society. Relationships between socially circulating folklore and other things, like identities or social structures, are based on interpretation, which can both change rapidly and may vary considerably by perspective within a society, so these tend to require zooming in on the micro-level of situation-specific use, use by particular individuals or in participation-based communities. In this respect, the present study differs by considering how the features brought into focus through a broad comparative perspective may offer insights into dominant ideologies integrated into – or potentially interfaced with – the traditions.

2.3. The *tietäjä* as Ritual Specialist

The Finno-Karelian incantations in focus below were central to the ritual technology of the vernacular specialist commonly known as a *tietäjä*. The word *tietäjä* is one of a variety of vernacular terms for ritual specialists, terms that could be linked to specific practices, technologies, social roles or abilities (see Jauhiainen 1998: D1; Siikala 2002a: 79–80). The vocabulary exhibits a degree of fluidity in use and interpretation,[27] but in general seems to have

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[26] The condition of having teeth varied between a requirement of having at least some teeth or having a full set of good teeth (e.g. SKS KRA Helmi Helminen 2514. 1944. Tulomajärvi (q); SKS KRA Jorma Partanen 1159. 1939. Valtimo (j)).

[27] This was not only owing to language and dialect. Collectors seem only to have become interested in asking about terms and distinctions between them at the end of the nineteenth century, when attitudes to such specialists were changing very rapidly (on which

been most stable with regard to whether the type of specialist held a positive relation to the community or was seen as dangerous and potentially hostile. The word *tietäjä* generally remained primary for the specialist user of incantations and rite techniques in focus here, although it could also be used for any such specialist with a positive relationship to the community, and, on a regional basis in Finland, *noita* ['witch; shaman'] or *velho* ['sorcerer'], normally used for a dangerous outsider to the community, is also found for *tietäjä*.

   The word *tietäjä* transparently derives from the verb *tietää* ['to know'] with an agentive affix, literally meaning 'knower, one who knows'. Even though the term *tietäjä* has cognates in other Finnic languages and also in Komi *tediś* (on which, see Il'ina & Ulyashev 2003; Konokov et al. 2003: 310), the *tietäjä* institution is a distinct development that appears specific to North Finnic cultures (Siikala 2002a; Frog 2013). In research, *tietäjä* was lifted from emic use in the early twentieth century and abstracted into a categorical term for the social institution of ritual specialists associated with kalevalaic incantations (e.g. Krohn 1915; but cf. *taikuri* ['charmer, magician'] in Holmberg 1916: 15); it is now used by researchers for that role irrespective of the vocabulary used in the primary sources.[28] This is a role identity that entailed socially structured expectations of responsibility, competence and authority within the community, making it reasonable to consider it a social institution (e.g. Haavio 1967: 314, 315–341; Siikala 2002a: 79–84).

   'Ritual specialist' describes the *tietäjä* as a role distinguishing the person from other people in a community, but being a *tietäjä* did not provide a livelihood. Coming from the outside, we tend to exoticize *tietäjä*s because we associate them with the supernatural, but communities could be quite small and *tietäjä*s were relatively common. The tradition or capacity to be a *tietäjä* was linked to families,[29] and could even be said to be something with which people are born, not taught,[30] but *tietäjä*s were not outsiders to their communities, and they seem to have had widespread presence.[31] Historical-

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see also Stark 2006: 49). Their prompts could also lead people to explain as many terms as possible, potentially making *ad hoc* distinctions between them (e.g. SKS KRA KRK 183. Jalmari Leppänen. 55. Kannus).

[28] The use of *tietäjä* in some if not many sources may also reflect the interpretation of a collector (cf. note 35 below).

[29] E.g. SKS KRA Samuli Paulaharju 22436. 1933. Vuoninen (p); SKS KRA Lauri Merikallio b) 103. 1909. Haapavesi (l); SKS KRA Frans Kärki 1904. 1943. Suistamo (i); this pattern is also reflected in families of informants (Niemi 1921).

[30] E.g. *Tietäjän taito on rotuperimys, sitä ei voi oppia, t.s. se on synnynnäistä* (SKS KRA Otto Harju 2529. 1938. Jämsä (d)). ['The *tietäjä*'s art is bread into you, you can't learn it, in other words, it's inborn'] (cf. Kopponen 1973: 79 and on being born with teeth above).

[31] Scattered comments are found about how 'there used to be one in every village' even in Southwest Finland, although not necessarily using the word *tietäjä* (e.g. SKS KRA Vettervik, V. PK 4: 680. Huittinen (b). [n.d.]).

ly, the *tietäjä* appears to have been a male-dominated institution, making men emblematic practitioners although women could also fill the role.[32] The *tietäjä* institution was not static: it evolved in relation to changing social, cultural and religious environments. Regional and local *tietäjä* traditions also evolved in relation to other related social institutions. Identification as a *tietäjä* was linked to social responsibility. In most regions, statements are found about the *tietäjä* not being able to charge a fee, which in some cases is explained as a sin (e.g. SKS KRA Iivo Härkönen 445. 1900. Suistamo (i)), or as rendering the work ineffective (SKS KRA Lauri Merikallio b) 100. 1909. Haapavesi (i)).[33] Ritual performance anticipated an appropriate show of appreciation through a suitable gift, of which alcohol seems to have been common (Apo 1999: 110; Stark 2006: 178) – i.e. the *tietäjä* could not propose a fee, but could accept what was given (e.g. SKS KRA Tauno Mäkipalo (Mohell) 758. 1934. Heinävesi (f)). Stories can also be found about the anger of *tietäjä*s at a gift that is seen as insultingly trifling or finding stones as his reward (Stark 2006: 178). Rather than reflecting economic concern about profit, such examples seem to be about social propriety in systems of reciprocity, reinforcing views of the *tietäjä* as a powerful agent who should not be offended. It is part of the discourse surrounding the *tietäjä*'s supernatural power and agency (agency in the sense of being able to affect things), which entailed potential for harm.[34] The *tietäjä* was not simply someone turned to for aid; he was a force in the world.

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[32] The *tietäjä*'s identity as gendered is occasionally found in explicit statements (e.g. SKS KRA Paajanen, Lyyli. KRK 82:9. Virtasalmi (f)), but is mainly a reconstruction based on diverse evidence, ranging from the predominance of men in early witch trials (Nenonen 1993: §5) to the gendered ego of the heroic kalevalaic singer (Timonen 2000: 656: Tarkka 2013: 251–252) and understandings of gendered bodies (cf. Stark-Arola 1998: 173; Stark 2006: 265; cf. Pentikäinen 1978: 117) in the era of collection. Women taking the *tietäjä*'s role should be viewed in relation to the progressive shift of kalevalaic poetry toward a women's singing tradition (Virtanen 1987: 18; Siikala 1990b; 2002b; Harvilahti 1992: 14).
[33] Items are not indexed for this in regions of Southwest Finland (regions a–d), or in Russian Karelia, although the latter most likely reflects the period and situation of collection for this material.
[34] E.g. *Itäkarjalan venäläisuskoiset, jos tietäjä (jumala) taloon tullessaan katso tarvitsevansa mitä hyvänsä, esim. tuoretta lihaa, silloin teurastavat, ettei vahinkoita sattuisi* (SKS KRA U. Holmberg b) 502. 1909. Polvijärvi (j)) ['East Karelian Orthodox believers, if when coming into a house a *tietäjä* (*jumala*) looks at anything whatsoever he needs, e.g. fresh meat, then they butcher [it], so that there would not be any accidental harm']. Changes in beliefs about these practices also sometimes discuss this in terms of not fearing them anymore (e.g. SKS KRA V. Hytönen b) 126 b. 1899. Juva (f)).

3. Ritual Technologies and Vernacular Physics

3.1. 'Ritual Technologies'?

Using the term 'technology' in connection with 'ritual' may be surprising for some readers. Today, technologies tend to be thought of in terms of mechanical and electronic devices, but a technology is basically a tool, technique or strategy that is employed for accomplishing something. Thus, the beginning of the Stone Age is marked by a technological revolution of tool use that has profound impacts on cultures that adopt the technology. The current paradigm of empirically-driven knowledge, commonly called 'scientific', presumes a fundamental division between 'real' and 'not real' in terms of the empirically verifiable. This thinking places technology on the side of that divide with true knowledge, conceived as the exclusive domain of science, which in turn affirms the superiority of modernized societies over all others. Technology thereby becomes contrasted with all other means of affecting outcomes that lack an empirically demonstrated basis. Such alternatives get described as 'magic', 'superstition', 'religion' and so on, all classed as 'not real' and therefore dismissed and disregarded. Although people tend to take this opposition for granted, it is a cultural construct.

Technologies accepted today did not necessarily depended on current scientific knowledge to become established. The magnetic compass and astrolabe are recognised as technologies because they are consistent with scientific thinking, but the magnetic compass was developed long before scientific explanations for magnetism and the astrolabe antedates the discovery that the earth is a spinning ball flying around the sun. Broken free from epistemologies to which we subscribe, technology becomes a concept that may take very different forms in conjunction in other frameworks of knowledge. On this basis, it becomes relevant to consider technologies that are the basis for alternative means of affecting the world. I describe those associated with practices we would call 'ritual' as *ritual technologies*. In my previous work, I have focused on how ritual technologies interface with conceptions of the body, in much the same way as modern medical technology is interfaced with a very different model of the body from traditional Chinese acupuncture (e.g. Frog 2013; 2019b). More generally, I have also considered how a technology is bound up with understandings of how the world is organized and works through the paradigms of interaction with unseen agents and forces in local or remote places (e.g. Frog 2010; 2019a). Here, attention turns to how models of understanding instruments of that technology are bound up with models of the world and how forces in it operate, making them significant for understanding how the instruments

themselves were conceived, and thus to the genre ideology of the *tietäjä*'s incantations.

3.2. A World of Dynamic Forces

The ritual technologies of the *tietäjä* were interfaced with understandings of the empirical, social and unseen worlds. The world was conceived through dynamic forces that correlate with types of things attributed with agency, broadly conceived as an ability to affect other things. 'Types of things' may seem vague and uninformative, but it reflects the diversity of categories covered. These includes people's bodies (Stark 2006: ch. 5 & 9–11), which can be distinguished from their sex appeal or the threatening energy of women's sexual organs (Apo 1993; 1998; Stark-Arola 1998). Supernatural agencies linked to places blurred with places themselves as having agency, such as the forest, cemetery or church (Koski 2011; Tarkka 2013; Piludu 2019). What might be described as natural elements, like water, fire, earth, stone or iron, were also conceived through such forces, and it was this type of agency that enabled iron to cut things, fire to burn, and so on (Stark 2006). The typology of forces seems to have been organized through, on the one hand, things that affect other things, and, on the other, sites associated with power or agency. Some forces can thus seem quite specific and localized, such as that of the forge or linked to the sauna (Krohn 1915: 93; Stark 2002b: 72–74, 82–83). Things in the empirical world would also embody these forces. A corpse became characterized by the force of the cemetery (Stark 2006: 265); animals were recognized as agents, but they seem to have generally been viewed as linked to broader categories of agency, like movement of animals reflecting activity of the force of the forest (Tarkka 2013: 337–382), the bear embodying that force (Piludu 2019), or snakes linked to the force of the earth (Hukantaival 2016: 125, 140). Animals could also be seen as instruments of hostile people, for instance sent to cause some harm (e.g. Siikala 2002a: 229; Stark 2006: 55, 236–237, cf. also 180–186). Probably the vast majority of people simply accepted ideas of how the world worked without much reflection (cf. Converse 1964). Nevertheless, a general framework for understanding the world and things in it appears to have been that things affect other things through interactions of dynamic forces associated with them.

The force of the living human body was called *luonto* ['nature'], a term not used for other-than-human agencies, noting that *ristikansat* ['humans'; literally '(emically-defined) Christian folks'] (cf. Stark 2002a: 127; *KKS*, *s.v.* 'ristikansa') were culturally rather than biologically defined (cf. Lévi-Strauss 1952: 11–16; de Castro 1998: 474–477; Lindow 1995). *Luonto* was

the animating force of the human body linked to conscious agency and will. Rather than approaching it as some sort of a 'soul',[35] *luonto* can perhaps be better understood as part of a vernacular physiology. It was not generally conceived as separable from the physical body or able to operate independently of the body (on regional variation, see Siikala 2002a: 250–260; see also below); nor was it used for the identity, consciousness and will of deceased individuals, although death was conceived not as cessation but as movement of the individual to a new community analogous to marriage (Stepanova 2014; Stepanova & Frog 2015; see also Frog 2019a: §5.4). The term *luonto* can thus be seen as deictically encoded as something linked to 'people like us' in contrast to people who are conceived of as 'other' – i.e. at a physiological level.[36] A person's *luonto* was conceived in terms of the capacity to affect things outside of it and of the potential for things outside of it to affect or penetrate it, imagined through oppositions of 'hard'/'soft' or 'strong'/'weak' (Stark 2006: 177–281). A *tietäjä* would 'raise' his *luonto*, entering into a so-called motoric trance, a type of light trance state that does not involve loss of consciousness (Siikala 1990: 194–195), conceived as making his *luonto* 'hard' and 'strong' so that other forces could not affect him, but he could manipulate them, and this force was also conceived as driving the efficacy of his incantations and ritual performance.

3.3. The *tietäjä*'s Technologies in Brief

Although interest here is in incantations, and incantations were primary and emblematic instruments of the *tietäjä*, they were used in combination with a variety symbolic instruments and what are here discussed as rite techniques. When faced with the corpus of poetry, it is easy to view an individual incantation text as the libretto of a ritual performance and to collapse the ritual into the performance of its libretto. The result of such thinking is that a ritual becomes imagined rather like an aria of an opera with only a single, unmoving singer visible in a spotlight on the stage. However, a ritual performance could involve multiple incantations and potentially multiple distinct rituals. Moreover, the unified textual identity of some long incantations is unambiguous, whereas others intersperse and coordinate discreet actions and ongoing activities with the verbal elements of perfor-

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[35] For a (rather dated) survey of vocabulary and conceptions of the soul, see Harva 1948: 234–262.

[36] It is therefore not clear that Laplanders were conceived as also having *luonto*, since they were linked to ideas that their conscious agency could move and act independent of the body (Jauhiainen 1998: D1031–1040; see also Frog 2019a: §1.4, §2.1.1).

mance. The latter can result in verbalization being discontinuous across the course of performance. The text-script of such a performance normally remains referred to as 'an' incantation in the singular. Such a text-script could also be described as presenting multiple incantations, each linked to particular phases of the performance, although it remains of interest that they appear perceived in the tradition as forming wholes.

Although the *tietäjä* was associated with waking ecstatic trance techniques in ritual performance, his ritual technology differed fundamentally from the technology of 'classic' shamanism, i.e. the shamanism of Northern and Central Eurasia.[37] Classic shamanism is built on models of engagement with remote otherworld locations through spatial movement, conceived in physical terms, by the shaman or his helping spirits. The *tietäjä* affected these locations remotely by actualizing and manipulating them using the verbal art of incantations, with no need to imagine contact in terms of movement through space (Frog 2013: 59–68). These differences are connected to differences in models of the body linked to the respective technologies. Forms of classic shamanism characteristically entail conceptions of a separable soul, built into illness diagnostics as something that may be lost or stolen, and as a basis for the potential of the shaman's conscious agency to travel and do things independent of his or her body. Although conceptions of the separable soul are found in certain narrative genres, it is absent from the *tietäjä*'s illness diagnostics and ritual performances (Honko 1960). The *tietäjä*'s technology is interfaced with a model of the body built on the concept of *luonto* that appears to exclude basic ideas about the soul on which forms of classic shamanism are based.

The *tietäjä*'s incantations are a distinctive technology. The supernatural power of 'words' in the sense of articulation in utterance was deeply rooted in Karelian culture (Tarkka 2013: ch. 10). However, incantations were qualified by having a distinct class of words with supernatural power, a genre ideology that can be compared and contrasted with, for example, the genre ideology of laments. In much of Europe, the genre ideology of incantations is that the texts could mechanically affect different worlds simply by being uttered. A text's efficacy was widely assumed to follow even from carrying it in written form. The genre ideology of such texts can be compared to that of scripted Christian prayers like *The Lord's Prayer* or *Hail Mary*, conceived as making present the protective power of Christian agents

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[37] I follow Lauri Honko (1969: 45) and Anna-Leena Siikala (1978) in distinguishing this more specific cross-cultural phenomenon as 'classic shamanism', which is characterized by a complex of features including the use of drumming in connection with ecstatic behavior (absent from the *tietäjä*'s technology), as well as models of the body as having a separable soul and cosmological models (Vajda 1959; cf. Hultkrantz 1973).

while being spoken, and, once the threat or danger was overcome, being enduring (i.e. recitation can stop without negative consequences). In contrast, the efficacy of the *tietäjä*'s incantations was dependent on his *luonto* rather than something exclusively entailed in the text itself. Stark (2002b: 43) emphasizes that this makes the force or power of incantations categorically distinct from forces linked to things in nature. Moreover, some descriptions attribute powerful *tietäjä*s with the power to affect the world through their *luonto*, including blood-stopping, independent of incantations (Stark 2006: 286–314). The genre ideology of the *tetiäjä*'s incantations characterized them as having supernatural potential, but as a distinct type of tool, the efficacy of which was dependent on the agency of the performer.

3.4. Mythic Knowledge and Actualizing the Unseen

Mythic knowledge is here conceived in terms of symbols that are emotionally invested by people in a community or society as models for interpreting, understanding and interacting with empirical, social and unseen worlds. This approach distinguishes, for example, the sun or wind as empirically experienced phenomena from socially constructed symbols that constitute their identities and how these are understood. Knowledge of the mythic world and its origins were fundamental to the *tietäjä* institution and its ritual technology, and first-hand knowledge of origins was the most powerful, an ideology built into incantations and both communicated and affirmed by mythological epics (Tarkka 2013: ch. 18). Such knowledge was communicated and internalized through kalevalaic poetry, especially the short-form mythological epic and incantations, which were interpenetrating genres (Tarkka 2013: ch. 5). As Siikala puts it: "The aspiring *tietäjä* did not merely learn illness diagnostics, incantation formulas and magic procedures by heart, he internalized and organized knowledge concerning the other world, its denizens and topography as an organic part of his world view" (Siikala 2002a: 84). Incantations verbalize such knowledge, often integrated with expressions for its manipulation.

The most salient engagement of mythic knowledge was the narration of events in mythic time, which seems to be linked to actualizing the represented mythic events or their power in the present of performance (Siikala 2002a: 86–90; cf. e.g. Функ 2005: ch. 4; Lintrop 2012: 404). The genre ideology conferred power on stretches of text expressing such knowledge, though its efficacy may have been interpreted differently by individual performers (see also Tarkka 2013: esp. 191). Other portions of incantations combine commands or requests and descriptions of agents in remote otherworld locations, such as the thunder-god or the 'maiden of pain' (see Siikala 2002a:

199–208). Responses to the *tietäjä* are never articulated: commands or requests properly formed with sufficiently strong *luonto* are implicitly followed by their successful outcome. Sometimes descriptions of supernatural agents like the 'black dog' are sufficient to manifest their power, which may simply augment the *tietäjä*'s own without necessarily being specifically directed (cf. Siikala 2002a: 107–109). Commands and requests also engage the agents and forces of harm or illness, and ultimately banish them from the performance space, often to a remote otherworld location. These portions of incantations actualize or manifest otherworld agents and compel their action in the unseen world. A third significant type of application of mythic knowledge is the verbalization of actions of the *tietäjä* in performance, actualizing their mythic proportions, whether in the form of a symbolic identity or describing outcomes of symbolic actions in the unseen world (e.g. *SKVR* XII$_1$ #3512; Siikala 2002a: 285; Frog 2017b: 296–297). These parts of incantations are verbal components of ritual that the genre ideology construes as actualizing and asserting interpretations of the mythic quality and potentially also the significance of empirically observable behaviours (see also Frog 2017b: 295).

Although incantations were powerful tools, their efficacy remained dependent on the performer's directed *luonto*. Whereas epics were structured by the linearity of a plot that lent stability in their social circulation as an ordered series of specific events, incantations were more dynamic: the order of elements might vary and alternative elements could be exchanged, linked into chains, and it was possible to move between the units of mythic knowledge realized through description or otherwise actualize engagements with the unseen: overall, incantations appear open to a significant range of flexibility (see Siikala 1986; 2002: 93–120). This is unsurprising when ritual performance was not based on mechanical recitation and was conceived as a framework of interaction for real-time engagements with the unseen world. In performance, different parts of incantations do different sorts of 'work', and variation can be construed as occurring according to needs in the interaction with beings and forces during the unfolding of the ritual.

4. From Mythic Knowledge to Knowledge Objects

4.1. Kalevalaic Poetry and the Linguistic Encoding of Knowledge

Although kalevalaic poetry varied, it can be described as textually relatively stable, at least at the level of 'chunks' of text used for representing particular images, motifs or filling other functions. In simplified terms, verses were made up of eight syllables with alliteration and rules controlling the placement of long and short stressed (i.e. initial) syllables. This generally

meant verses were only 2–4 words long and two of these should alliterate (i.e. start with the same sound), while rules about long and short syllables prevented words from moving within a verse for example to add an inflectional ending (in English, see further Leino 1986: ch. 15; Kuusi et al. 1977: 62–65; Kallio et al. 2016–2017: 143–145). These factors inclined phraseology to crystallize for whole verses. The poetry is characterized by semantic and syntactic parallelism (Saarinen 2017; Frog 2017c; see also Frog & Tarkka 2017). The stylistic tendency was toward concentrated presentation of units of narration, description, speech, etc., rather than the sort of elaboration with accompanying variation of long epic forms (Honko 1998: 36), on the basis of which Oral-Formulaic Theory was developed (e.g. Lord 1960). The result is that the poetry was not produced on a formula-by-formula and verse-by-verse level of composition in performance as in models of Homeric or South Slavic epic. Instead, units of traditional expression generally operated through what can be described as 'macro-formulae' – tight systems of formulae and vocabulary that provided a framework for expressing the particular motif, ritual unit or whatever in a series of about two to perhaps ten verses (see Frog 2016a; also Frog 2017c), as in the following example from an incantation *historiola* (narration within the charm text):

Pohjan akka, harva hammas	North's old woman, sparse-toothed
Käveleva kässehtivi	was walking, strolling
Varjossa vaskisen vaaran	in the shadow of a copper mountain
Kipuvaaran kinterillä	at the foot of Pain-Mountain
Lapin laajassa salossa	in Lapland's wide wilds
Luona tulisen kosken	by the fiery rapids
Pahan virran partahalla	alongside the evil stream
Tunsipa kohtunsa kovaksi	felt her womb become hard
Vatsansa pahoin pakoksi	her belly hurt badly

(*SKVR* I$_4$ #1191.1–9, punctuation removed.)

Many are, however, relatively simple units, such as the following from an epic dialogue, in which a potential groom is given a quest to catch a giant fish:

Engä anna, engä lubua	I won't let, won't allow
Kuin suanet on suuren hauvin	until you've got the great pike
Jordanatan on jovessa	in the River Jordan
Suuren kosken korvalla'a	in its hard rapids
Pyhän virran pyörtijöillä	in the holy stream's swirl

(*SKVR* VII$_1$ #397.63–67, punctuation removed.)

Such macro-formulae could vary morphologically and some had 'slots' that might be filled by different things as in a series of questions. They could also vary internally, for example in the presence, absence or order of verses with potential for some variation in phraseology. Nevertheless, poems in most regions tended to be formed by chaining such macro-formulae in series rather than, embedding them in one another or even having free arrangements of verses between them. An epic of a hundred lines in performance could be comprised of less than twenty such macro-formulae, which was possible in part because several of these would be reused with variation in dialogue or sequences of narration (for an illustration, see Frog 2016a: 66–72). In this light, the verbal stability of kalevalaic epics as not just stories but as texts is unsurprising, particularly when the dominant text ideology valorized or simply imagined non-variation in reperformance (Frog 2016a: 66). In incantations, these macro-formula units seem to be more flexible, but this is methodologically difficult to assess: the corpus generally reflects a large number of examples from different informants rather than multiple examples from a single informant. Moreover, whereas epics were publicly performed as a social tradition, incantations were subject to 'closed conduit' transmission (Frog 2009: 13): although describing incantations as 'secret' seems to reflect a text ideology of researchers rather than tradition bearers, they were communicated through chains of authoritative users who did not negotiate them toward social norms within a community generally or even with one another. Although it is an oversimplification, the basic idea is that each piece of narration, description or other conventional unit expressed through the poetry tended to be formulated with a corresponding set of verses, even if these might vary. The most significant difference between the operation of these units in epic and incantation was the degree to which the relevant macro-formulae were subject to social regulation.

The interfacing of what is expressed with macro-formula units that produce chunks of verses is significant for understanding incantations and their variation in performance. Each unit of the tradition becomes *linguistically encoded*,[38] providing the performer with a prefabricated verbal framework through which it can be expressed, enabling the performer to articulate that unit in verse without conscious reflection. This linguistic encoding reciprocally structures and stabilizes the unit in the mind of the performer. For example, the bee is common as a spirit-helper of the *tietäjä*, but it is exceptional for spirit-helpers to be regularly described as moving between worlds. Nevertheless, such movement is an established part of the macro-formula conventional for representing the bee, as here:

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[38] Siikala describes these as "ready-coded" (1986: 201) or "precoded" (2002a: 111) linguistic units.

Mehiläinen ilman lintu	bee, bird of the air
Lennä tuonne liuottele	fly there, slide
Ylitse meren 9	over the ninth sea
Meri 1/2 10	half of the tenth sea

(*SKVR* I$_4$ #130.156–159, punctuation removed.)

The following example shows the same macro-formula used in a historiola, narrated in the past tense:

Mehiläinen ilman lintu	bee, bird of the air
Lenti tuonne liipotteli	flew there, soared
Lenti soita, lenti maita	flew swamps, flew lands
Ylitse meren yheksän	over the ninth sea
Meri puolen kymmenettä	half of the tenth sea

(*SKVR* I$_4$ #175.71–75, punctuation removed.)

The description of movement between worlds is generally unusual, it is regular for the bee. This consistency is related to the social stability of the macro-formula with which the bee is regularly introduced, because the bee's flight "over nine seas" is built into it (see further Frog 2019a: §3.2.2). The macro-formula may then be followed by an elaboration of one or several additional macro-formula units in series as a short narrative description of the bee's activities, although the macro-formula above is the most socially stable element of these representations.

The *tietäjä*'s rituals were imagined in terms of real-time engagements (often involving the symbolism of battle) with unseen agents and forces. Within that context, the linguistic encoding of something like the bee and its flight operates as more than simply an interface of a macro-formula with what it is used to express or describe: the bee is a resource and instrument of the *tietäjä*; the macro-formula is bound up with knowledge of the bee, what it can accomplish for the performer and, in the case of the bee, in what way it does so. Linguistic encoding thus occurs for the unit of mythic knowledge itself, which in this case forms a complex package of the mythic image of the bee as an agent, the motif of its flight, and also the knowledge of how to actualize and orchestrate its activity within a framework of ritual performance. The linguistic encoding of mythic knowledge enabled potentially very flexible situational variation in ritual performance because each unit of ritual, each mythic image and motif had a ready-made way to express it in the verse, and bringing either to mind would allow the expression of the other.

4.2. Incantation Texts as Knowledge Objects

The text ideology of the *tietäjä*'s incantations conceived them as textual wholes that corresponded to units of power and knowledge. The loss of power of an incantation in transmission fits within the broader paradigm of loss of magical knowledge. The exchange of such knowledge including as a commodity in trade is also widely attested (Stark 2006: 165–172). As discussed above, Finnish and Karelian traditions qualified the loss of power as only happening when transmitted to someone older. Several ways to prevent such loss are also recorded (e.g. Borenius 1904: 478), which include, for example, a verbal assertion that transmission is from older to younger if the empirical situation is the reverse (e.g. SKS KRA I. Marttini b) 652. 1901. Vuokkiniemi, Kivijärvi (p); also Tarkka 2013: ch. 10).

Although incantations tend to dominate the field of vision in academic discussion, *loitsu* ['incantation'] or other vernacular terms for the textual part of tradition are far less frequent in the documented meta-discourse on this aspect of the tradition. The most common word is *taika* ['charm, magic'], including in various compounds, and the second most common is *tieto* ['knowledge']. The special connection between the charm text and power is nevertheless reflected in informants withholding lines of verse in order to avoid losing an incantation's power. A. A. Borenius (1904: 478) points out that this is specifically linked to another person *learning* the incantation (cf. Siikala 2002a: 265).[39] An incantation was a verbal component of a broader rite, yet the risk of loss of power seems to have been particularly connected with the verbal text, and more specifically with the complete text. This reveals an ideology of the text's identity as a unitary whole that only works when complete. The threat that power will be *lost* when an incantation is learned by someone else reveals an ideology of these unitary wholes as singular and consolidated 'things' that were possessed like material objects. The complete textual unit can be transferred with its supernatural power rather like a knife or a teacup: only one person can possess it at a time, unless certain conditions are met that allow its reduplication. Incantations thus seem to have been conceived in the oral culture as a sort of *text-object* that had an unseen reality. Although the question of memory appears in a few accounts (e.g. Stark 2006: 230–231), most simply refer to the loss of power or efficacy, and thus the text might potentially be remembered by multiple individuals while its power has only one possessor.

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[39] A few accounts also connect this with teaching incantations (e.g. SKS KRA Ulla Mannonen 9890. 1938. Valkeasaari (s); SKS KRA A. V. Rantasalo 630. 1935. Salmi, Hysrylä (i)), which raises additional questions about the transfer of power.

Tarkka (2005: 87) stresses that the 'force' of incantations is distinct from that of other things manipulated by the *tietäjä*, which is always linked to material manifestations (cf. Stark 2002a: 43). Nevertheless, texts seem to have been conceived and circulated as some sort of artefacts that could be possessed and exchanged. Reference is not to 'texts' but to 'charms' or 'knowledge', and the units concerned appear to be integers of mythic knowledge as instruments of supernatural power. Incantations thus seem to have been a particular textual category of *knowledge-objects* that could be exchanged. When incantations are situated among other tools of a *tietäjä*'s trade, they appear on the one hand to hold innate power – a dynamic force comparable to other forces in the *tietäjä*'s world, although their efficacy remains dependent on the *tietäjä*'s *luonto*. Other forces manifested in material symbols that were then used to manipulate and direct the supernatural forces which they embodied. When incantations are conceived as text-objects that embody supernatural power, they can be viewed in parallel to these material symbols. From this perspective, an incantation as a knowledge-object has supernatural power that can be directed as a dynamic force to affect seen and unseen worlds in conjunction with the *tietiäjä*'s own power and will.

How incantations were conceived as operating within the vernacular physics remains a matter of conjecture. Nevertheless, the incantation technology was not simply an instrument for affecting the unseen world. Evidence is fairly clear that incantations were somehow instrumental in the actualization of the *tietäjä*'s power or will on remote locations, agents and forces that he sought to prompt, direct and control. Here, we may observe that *perception* appears significant to a *tietäjä*'s ability to direct his *luonto* and affect the world: some reports tell that a *tietäjä* could not stop bleeding without also seeing it, and powerful *tietäjä*s could be said to be able to stop the flow of blood when seeing it without resort to incantation or ritual, and there are numerous accounts that things which were seen could be prevented from causing harm, ranging from wasps to something with which one would be beaten (Jauhiainen 1998: D266–267, D678; Stark 2006: 303–306 and see also 416–421). Within the framework of vernacular ideas of how the world works, it seems probable that incantations were conceived as somehow linked to bringing agents and forces into focus (perception) and relevant if not required for a *tietäjä* to manipulate them through his *luonto*.[40] Whatever the case, the *tietäjä* has access to the power of that knowledge object until it is transferred to (learned by) someone else.

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[40] When discussing incantations that present knowledge of the creation story of a source of harm, Siikala (2002a: 89–90) proposes that knowledge of origins empowers the performer over those things (on analogy to shamanic traditions). Historically, *tietäjä* tradi-

4.3. Knowledge Objects and Variation in Practice

The implicit conception of incantations as knowledge-objects formed of texts as wholes presents a peculiar riddle when considered against actual variation. If ritual performances were real-time engagements with the imaginal unseen world actualized through the text, a tension seems to emerge between the identity of an incantation as a knowledge object of dynamic power and the flexibility enabled by linguistically-encoded units through which those engagements are actualized in performance.

As noted above, incantations appear much more flexible and variable in performance than epic, allowing alternation of individual elements, expansion and so on (Siikala 1986; 2002a: 93–120; see also Piela 2005). Kalevalaic epic narratives are constituted of series of narrative elements organized in a potentially complex hierarchy from broad narrative patterns of whole cycles and episodes within those cycles to complex themes of which episodes are constituted, and down to the motifs and images that correlate with linguistic macro-formulae. An epic's plot and its social negotiation stabilize variation, yet units at each of these structural levels can vary between local and regional dialects of singing, or even between singers and individual performances. A common underlying plot structure had led a *tietäjä*'s rituals to be commonly recognized as being organized as a drama (Honko 1959: 202–207; 1960; Haavio 1967: 340–341; see also Siikala 2002a: 100–101), in which the unseen is manifested centrally through verbal art. Ulla Piela (2005: 13) proposes that "incantations are, in the context of the rite, *narratives which heal*" (see also Frog 2010). The principle of a plot structure actualized as experience for the specialist, unseen agents, and, for example, a patient, can be generalized for other rituals of the *tietäjä*. Indeed, actualizing a plot structure as experience is found for rituals of many types of specialists, from the Karelian lamenter, who narrates the dangerous journey of the deceased and successful integration into the community of ancestors (Stepanova 2017: 498–499), to shamans who actualize their own or their spirit-helpers' dangerous journey to an otherworld and successful return. Difference between variation in kalevalaic epic and incantation thus cannot simply be attributed to a fundamental difference in structure.

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tions were tremendously influenced by North Germanic models (Frog 2013). More recent Scandinavian traditions connect 'naming' with disempowerment or the breaking of enchantment (e.g. af Klintberg 2010: J31, J80, Q42, Q45–46). In practice, understandings of how or why particular elements of charms were efficacious could be open to interpretation. The model presented here suggests that verbal art operated as corollate with perception, and perception enabled the specialist to affect that which was perceived through his *luonto*, while verbal art could also potentially orchestrate how these effects transpired.

With incantations, a significant factor in the amount of variation visible in the corpus may simply be that early collectors sought materials from as many informants as possible rather than multiple examples from single individuals. Closed conduit transmission rather than social negotiation likely increased variation of what was transmitted in each conduit not unlike dialectal variation in epic on a local and regional basis. Conventions of non-variation in epic reproduction are also linked to social conventions, which individual performers could engage or reject (cf. Harvilahti 1992b; Siikala 1992b). Such conventions cannot be assumed uniform for the incantation tradition, where text ideologies of what constitutes the sameness of text identity might have varied considerably. Local and regional variation in epic commonly occurs in one of two types. One type is driven by social changes in meanings/interpretations or uses and functions. The other, more basic type is alternation between functional equivalent units without impacting the larger narrative unit in which they occur. This might be one macro-formula for another expressing the same content, the image of one monster faced by the hero for another, the theme of a whole challenge faced by the hero for another, or even a whole episode for another, which might be transplanted, ready-made from another epic. In incantations, variation in functional equivalence is no less possible, such as exchanging one spirit-helper for another, one theme of an agent in the unseen world for another, etc., without disrupting the broader narrative pattern actualized through performance.

The corpus-based approach reveals variation without the possibility of asking direct questions to the people responsible for it, so any model accounting for variation remains hypothetical. However, the organization of incantations might be viewed in terms of 'moves' of the specialist in engagements with unseen agents and forces within a larger script of the 'narrative' that the ritual should ideally follow (Piela 2005). The ideology of sameness as text identity likely manifested principally at the level of this script. Because text identity operates as a subjectively perceived quality, there could be considerable variation in the degree to which constituent images, motifs and themes were strictly prescribed or open to alternation between functional equivalents, elaboration through parallelism or other addition (cf. Frog 2017c), and what elements might be collapsed or omitted without violating the whole (cf. Honko 1998: ch. A.3). Particularly when *tietäjä*s were confident in their own knowledge and power, they may have been equally confident in their ability to push limits of flexibility.

When viewed in this light, pre-coded linguistic units interfaced with mythic knowledge appear to operate in combination with incantations, if an incantation was broadly conceived as an organizing script, perhaps characterized by a core set of images, motifs, and maybe a *historiola*. On the other

hand, foregrounding potential for variation may distract from the predictability of a ritual's structure. The real-time engagements with agents and forces in a ritual are predominantly with imaginally-projected counter-roles rather than having independent autonomy (irrespective of how they may be construed), or they are reflected in empirically observable things that can be imaginally interpreted (cf. Frog 2017b: §3). The potential for actual variation thus becomes anticipated by the *tietäjä* and perceived as directed by his *luonto*, reducing it to the realm of possibility without necessarily manifesting in performance.

The strategy of preserving the power of the incantation as a knowledge object by omitting 'words' (= verses) reflects an ideology of the knowledge object as a text made of language iconic of the ritual whole. Whatever the degree of potential or actual variation, knowledge collapses with a subjectively conceived text as a linguistic entity. Much as performers of South Slavic epic might claim 'word-for-word' reproduction of an epic (Foley 2002: 11–18), the *tietäjä* conceived of knowledge through a linguistic identity that could be disrupted through omission. Trying to reconcile conscious, strategic verbal omissions with textual variation observed through comparative analysis is probably like trying to compare apples with photographs of people who pick and eat them. The verbal omissions occur in conscious relation to a performer's text ideology, while empirically observable variations may be rendered invisible by that same ideology. The tension between knowledge objects as things made of language on the one hand and variation in practice and transmission and the other may be an illusion created by trying to view both through a single lens. No such tension is observable in connection with emic text ideologies of the tradition; the tension which only emerges when an etic text ideology is imposed that brings variation into focus.

5. A Perspective

The Finno-Karelian case has a number of interesting facets, many of which are dependent on the culture and its tradition, such as the condition that power will be lost when an incantation is taught to someone older but not to someone younger, or that the incantations could easily be a hundred lines long or longer with great potential for variation. The case study offers a perspective on a broader conceptual paradigm of the loss of power with the communication of an incantation, a conception that appears to be interfaced with ideologies of genre, text and knowledge which form a paradigm of premises for understanding incantations' operation, social circulation and the metadiscourse surrounding them. These ideologies entail that *a*) a text

of this text-type (genre) is a discreet object that *b*) is emblematic of the per-
formed ritual, *c*) conceived as knowledge, and *d*) characterized by a reusable
dynamic force for affecting the world. This implicit ideological paradigm is
then open to interpretation, although people in society may simply accept
the conception of loss without reflection on how it 'works' or trying to re-
late it to other ideas (cf. Converse 1964). The position of knowledge can be
considered tradition-dependent in the degree that verbal text corresponds
to knowledge that it mediates or enacts. Knowledge of a verbal text of this
text-type thus corresponds to that mythic knowledge. The ritual structure
of the verbal text entails knowledge of how to use that mythic knowledge,
and indeed corresponds to a unit of mythic knowledge as an empowered
plot-type that, when actualized as experience with sufficient innate force of
the performer, will entail the desired outcome. Similarly tradition depend-
ent are strategies for avoiding the loss of power in transmission (or whether
there are any at all) that allow the reduplication of the knowledge-object
with its power, and which in the *tietäjä* tradition are most widely (although
it seems unusually) linked to age hierarchies. The particular case thus pro-
vides a framework for considering how the underlying ideology manifests
and is interpreted in other specific tradition ecologies.

More generally, this case study illustrates text and genre ideologies.
These ideologies become salient where incantations form a vernacular text-
type category of supernaturally empowered knowledge objects made of
language that are iconic of potentially complex ritual performance, while
individual incantations are conceived as discreet things made of language,
the power of which can be lost if given as whole to someone else, but pre-
served when words are omitted. Genre ideology and text ideology are close-
ly linked, particularly as the genre ideology confers an identity for under-
standing texts of the particular type. The case of the *tietäjä*'s incantation
technology also brings to light genre ideologies that outsiders to the tradi-
tion may project by analogy, such as viewing it through a lens of 'secret'
knowledge. It is alluring to see the condition of loss of power in transmis-
sion as concentrating power and its maintenance in the hands of *tietäjä*s,
but such a view would be driven by *a priori* social interpretations: the situ-
ation appears more nuanced when the predominant emic model only en-
tailed loss of power if transmission concentrated power in the preceding
generation through transmission to an older rather than a younger per-
son.[41] Similarly, the impression that incantation variation seems difficult to
reconcile with identity as text object and knowledge object appears to be

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[41] It may also be remembered that the efficacy of incantations was dependent on one's
luonto, without which the knowledge would not necessarily do one any good (explicitly in
SKR KRA Hugo Hörtsänä 383. 1953. Orivesi (b)).

a by-product of text ideologies imposed on the tradition: emic text ideologies render any issue of variation invisible or erase it, leaving text identity reflexively defined by the individual *tietäjä*. Bringing the concepts of text and genre ideology into focus through this case study is hoped to reveal their potential for other research, both to better appreciate and understand emic perspectives on a tradition and also to become aware of the intuitive projection of corresponding ideologies when developing interpretations.

Acknowledgements

Abbreviations

KKS = *Karjalan Kielen Sanakirja*. Retrieved from: http://kaino.kotus.fi/cgi-bin/kks/karjala.cgi

SKS KRA = Folklore Archive of the Finnish Literature Society.

SKVR = *Suomen Kansan Vanhat Runot* I–XV. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 1908–1997. Digital edition retrieved from: http://skvr.fi/.

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Приступ идеологијама ствари начињених од језика: Студија случаја о финско-карелској техници бајања

Фрог

Резиме

У овом раду представљен је приступ идеологијама текста и категоријама типа текста како би се приближиле емске концепције о стварима начињеним од језика или других врста знакова. Финско-карелске басме ритуалног специјалисте познатог као *tietäjä* [шамански свештеник, бајач, врач, мудрац] чине грађу за студију случаја, разматрану у ширем контексту култура у Балтичкој регији и окружењу. Идеологија текста је истакнута у овој традицији захваљујући идеји да ће се моћ басме изгубити кад је извођач некоме саопшти у целини, али не ако се стихови изоставе.

Представе о басми као врсти предмета начињеног од језика су широко распрострањене у различитим облицима, као и идеја да моћ басме може да се пренесе у материјалне предмете, и да се посредством њих даље може том моћи управљати (нпр. у руској традицији изговорена молитва може се носити и предати у капи, или се басма може наменити течности или предмету који се по-

том прогута као средство преношења њихове моћи и тако утиче на пацијента). Идеја да текст може да се поново користи и да као такав има специфичан идентитет, као и сродна идеја да он може да делује на свет, постају полазиште у решавању питања о томе шта се дешава са моћи и текстом-предметом кад је он пренет неком другом.

Дискусија је распоређена у четири одељка и доноси различите врсте контекстуализације пре расправљања о емским концепцијама самих басми. Отпочиње се теоријским уводом у идеологије текста и идеологије жанра у односу на језичке идеологије. Овај одељак укључује позиционирање приступа из перспективе (финских) студија фолклора како би тема била мултидисциплинарно приступачна. Други одељак контекстуализује *tietäjä* као друштвену установу, корпус и приступ. У трећем одељку представљени су ритуална техника *tietäjä*, физичка својства света у којима ови ритуални специјалисти делају, и шта се замишља да они 'чине' у ритуалном извођењу. Четврти одељак посвећен је схватању басми као врсте текста-предмета с обзиром на технику и њихово варирање у пракси.

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